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*Arctostaphylos tomentosa*

[Synonyms : *Arbutus tomentosa*]

**MARGANITA** is an evergreen shrub or tree. Native to western North America it has white or pink flowers.

It is also known as Downy manzanita, Madrona, Manzanita, Shaggy-barked manzanita, Woollyleaf manzanita, and Woolly manzanita.

Warning – excessive intake of the fruit can cause intestinal disorders.

*Tomentosa* means ‘densely woolly, hairy or matted hairy’.

For tribes such as the Mendocino Indian, Pomo and Miwok in California the ripe fruit were a significant part of their diet. They used it in various ways. Both the Miwok and Mendocino Indian made the fruit into an unfermented cider-like drink and the latter also dried them for food in Winter. The Pomo on the other hand seem to have put particular store in the seeds, as these were either sun dried and formed into biscuits or ground to make a porridge-like mush.

Both the Quileute and Hoh tribes smoked the leaves.

As a medicine, records indicate that the Miwok Indians not only prescribed it for some stomach ailments but also valued it as an appetite enhancer. The Costanoan tribe on the other hand employed the bark in the treatment of some internal haemorrhaging.

The tiny brownish-red fruit are a particular delicacy for bears.

A spicy cider known as Manzanita cider has been made by scalding the ripe fruit, and unripe they have been used to prepare preserves too.

Branches have been used to make walking sticks.

In the United States the wood is used today on a commercial basis for fine cabinetwork.

Medicinally, the leaves have been used by North American herbalists.